

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 8-16, 18, and 55 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-18 and 55 were examined. Claims 2, 5, 7, and 17 have been cancelled by amendment.

In the office action mailed June 2, 2006, the Examiner objected to claims 7 and 17. The Examiner further rejected claims 1-18 under 35 U.S.C. 101 and rejected claims 7 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. Claims 1, 4-6, 16, and 55 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,093,794 to Howie *et al.*, and claims 3, 8-15, 17, and 18, were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Howie patent. The Examiner indicated that claim 7 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 101 and 112, second paragraph, and in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim.

With respect to the Examiner's objection to claims 7 and 17, both claims have been cancelled rendering the Examiner's objection moot.

With respect to the Examiner's rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 101, the claims have been amended to recite, "a computer-implemented method" as suggested by the Examiner. The Examiner's rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 101 should now be withdrawn.

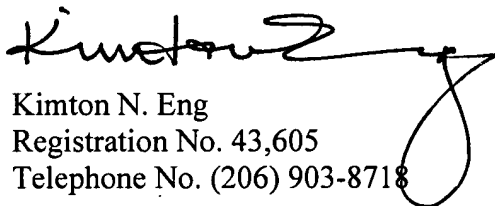
Claims 1 and 16 have been amended to include the limitations of allowable claim 7, and consequently, are in condition for allowance. Claims 3, 4, 6, 8-15, which depend from claim 1, and claims 18 and 55, which depend from claim 16, are similarly in condition for allowance based on their dependency from a respective allowable base claim.

The amendments made to the claims have been made to expedite the allowance of allowable subject matter. The amendments, however, should not be interpreted as reflecting Applicant's belief that the subject matter of the unamended claims is unpatentable, or that the Applicant has forfeited the subject matter of the unamended claims. Moreover, Applicant has not addressed the merits of the Examiner's rejection of the claims, or whether the Examiner's characterizations of the cited references are accurate. Therefore, the presumption that Applicant has tacitly acknowledged the merit of the rejections or that the references cited by the Examiner are relevant to the patentability of the present invention should not be made.

All of the pending in the present application are in condition for allowance.
Favorable consideration and a timely Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosures:

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Fee Transmittal Sheet (+ copy)

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